Teacher Answer Key

Case Study

1. The tablets record the mundane reality of ordinary soldiers — complaints about cold, requests for supplies, descriptions of boredom — rather than battles or politics. This humanizes history by revealing that ancient people experienced the same everyday frustrations as modern ones, making them relatable and giving historians a view of life that official records never captured.

2. It shows that some of our most valuable historical sources were preserved entirely by accident — the letter survived not because anyone valued it but because it was forgotten and buried. Historians often rely on accidentally preserved materials: letters that were never sent, objects left behind, waste discarded at abandoned sites.

Multiple Choice

1. D

2. B

3. C

Matching

1-D, 2-C, 3-E, 4-B, 5-A

Fill-in-the-Blank

1) Ming, 2) tablets, 3) 21,000

Short Answer (Sample Responses)

Q1: The phrase implies a single unified structure, but the wall was actually built by dozens of different dynasties over 2,000+ years using different materials and designs. The Qin built rammed earth, the Han extended it westward, and the Ming built the stone-and-brick version tourists see today — each a separate project with different purposes.

Q2: Written texts record official history — kings' decisions, battle outcomes, state projects. Archaeological evidence from worker camps shows skeletal evidence of hard labor, nutritional deficiencies, and trauma, revealing the human cost of the wall that official histories tended to minimize or ignore.

Q3: Official documents record what governments wanted remembered — victories, edicts, policies. Personal letters reveal how ordinary soldiers actually lived: their

boredom, physical hardships, concerns about supplies, and longing for home. This everyday perspective is almost completely absent from formal historical records.